

Eye on Assessment: FAQ

How will Smarter Balanced Meet the Needs of All Students?

The Smarter Balanced assessment system will provide accurate measures of achievement and growth for students with disabilities and English language learners. The assessments will address visual, auditory, and physical barriers—as well as the unique needs of English language learners—allowing virtually all students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Accessibility is a core principal of the Smarter Balanced development process. The assessment system uses technology to deliver assessments that fit the needs of individual students. [Assessment items](#) and performance tasks will be associated with a variety of accessibility tools and accommodations that can be delivered to students automatically based on their profile. Accessibility tools include, but are not limited to: foreground and background colors; tactile presentation of content (e.g., Braille); and translated presentation of content in signed form and select languages. Online delivery of Smarter Balanced assessments ensures that students can take a test individualized to meet their needs at the same time as their peers.

All items and tasks will be reviewed for accessibility following the Smarter Balanced Item Specifications and Review Guidelines.

Smarter Balanced is working with educators, students, and experts in the field to design and test the assessment system. Smarter Balanced works with advisory panels on English language learners and students with disabilities to ensure that the assessments are developed using principles of Universal Design and research-based best practices.

Smarter Balanced has recently conducted a [Pilot Test](#) across Smarter Balanced member states to better understand how students respond to assessment items. This pilot test allowed the Smarter Balanced Consortium to gather information about the performance of assessment items and the test delivery system under real-world conditions across the 21 state Consortium in over 5,000 schools.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Smarter Balanced assessments in Vermont. [Click here](#) to learn more about our standards for English language arts and math.